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STATE FOR AF/W
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SUBJECT: SOUTHERN NIGERIA POLITICAL TIDBITS THROUGH JUNE
2006

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reason 1.4 (D)

¶1. (U) Following is a roundup of political items from the
Lagos Consular district, Southern Nigeria, through June 2006.

National - Indictment to Block Atiku Candidacy?

¶2. (C) Prominent attorney Femi Falana, a close friend of
Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) head Nuhu
Ribadu, said President Obasanjo plans to use the EFCC as a
vehicle for the indictment of Vice President Atiku in order
to block Atiku's increasingly favorable Presidential
aspirations. Under Nigerian law, a pending indictment would
exclude that person from running for political office,
according to Falana.

National - Former ANPP National Chairman Quits the Party

¶3. (SBU) Chief Don Etiebet, former National Chairman of the
All Nigeria Peoples' Party (ANPP), left the party amid
speculation the Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) offered him
the gubernatorial nomination for Akwa Ibom State in 2007.
Etiebet, a former Chieftain for the PDP, joined the ANPP in
2002 and eventually became its National Chairman. Although he
gave no reason for his resignation, there are indications it
resulted from an internal power play that divided the ANPP.
His sister-in-law told PolCouns that "the family has been
trying to get him out of politics for months." Efforts to
reconcile the two ANPP factions have been unsuccessful.
Etiebet has been excoriated by critics within the ANPP ever
since the 2003 elections. Many of his critics believe he
never truly left the PDP and was Obasanjo's trojan horse,
sent to destroy the ANPP from within. An Etiebet return to
the PDP fold would be viewed as evidence confirming these
denunciations.

South-West - High Court denies AD faction recognition

¶4. (U) An Abuja High Court dismissed a petition filed by an
Alliance for Democracy (AD) faction led by Senator Mojisolwa
Akinfenwa seeking a ruling on which of two AD factions is
legitimate. On June 15, the court ruled the Akinfenwa
faction did not meet the requirements for recognition as the
legitimate AD party. However, the court also fell short of
recognizing the Bisi Akande-led faction, leaving the issue
for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to
decide. After INEC then failed to endorse the Akande

faction, Chief Bisi Akande accused INEC of favoring the Akinfenwa group and called the Akinfenwa faction a "branch of the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party." Akande had previously told PolSpec the PDP was bankrolling the Akinfenwa group in order to destabilize the AD. Akande vowed to go to court if INEC does not recognize his group.

South-West - Oyo Lawmakers' seat declared vacant

¶15. (U) Another political crisis is looming in Oyo State following the State House of Assembly's expulsion of thirteen legislators absent from their seats since the January impeachment of Governor Rashidi Ladoja. The thirteen were allied to Ladoja. The House passed a resolution directing Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala to advise the INEC to conduct an election to fill the vacant seats. However, a spokesperson for the thirteen expelled legislators declared the resolution illegal, as there is a court order directing both parties to maintain the status quo. The thirteen legislators have not appeared in the House since their failed bid to block Ladoja's impeachment.

South-East - Chris Uba shares Zonal and National Election Insights

¶16. (C) South-East political figure and Obasanjo insider Chris Uba told the Consul General his brother Andy Uba might stay in his current role if the President decides he wants the assurance of Andy's loyal eyes to watch over Obasanjo's successor should Obasanjo succeed in getting his candidate the Presidency; otherwise, Andy has his eyes set on being the

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next governor of Anambra State. Chris Uba claimed the President's current scheme is to select a northern governor for president, a governor from the South-East as vice president, and to placate the South-South with an increased oil revenue derivation. Chris Uba said he is soon traveling to the U.S., and one stop is to visit a manufacturer of electronic voting machines. (Comment: The electoral bill and INEC backed away from the electronic voting option for 2007; Uba's visit to a voting machine manufacturer may be a signal that at least some figures within the president's informal kitchen cabinet have not discarded electronic voting for next year's elections. End comment.)

South-South - Entertainers Share Plot to Foment Unrest

¶17. (C) Two popular musicians from Bayelsa State told the Consul General their uncle, an influential Ijaw spiritual leader in Bayelsa, belongs to a group blood-sworn to take action in the Niger Delta and foment further militant activity. The group reportedly includes Niger Delta Development Commission Executive Director for Finance and Administration Timi Alaibe. The musicians said that Alaibe, who covets the Bayelsa gubernatorial seat, wants to cause disturbances in the state to create the impression that current Bayelsa Governor Goodluck Jonathan can't control his state. Also, both Alaibe and the Uncle purportedly have proprietary interests in some of the local security companies hired by the oil firms. Additional militant activity will lead to more uneasiness among the oil companies, who will then pay a higher price to these firms. The musicians said their uncle now wanted to disassociate himself from the group because he supports Governor Jonathan. Their uncle claimed at one point Alaibe was trying to hire an assassin to kill Governor Jonathan, but their uncle forestalled the plot. Now their uncle is afraid to leave out of fear of becoming the group's next target.

~~¶~~8. (U) This cable was cleared by Embassy Abuja.
BROWNE